

AN ADEQUATE PROTECTIVE PROGRAM BY MEANS OF
WHICH COMMUNITIES CAN SAFEGUARD THEIR WAYWARD GIRLS

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Bibliography

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WHICH COMMUNITIES CAN SAFEGUARD THEIR WAYWARD GIRLS

In every community of our country, the problem of preventing younger girls from going astray is of growing importance. The public is not generally acquainted with the large number of girls who are now leading questionable lives. In fact many girls are not openly living such lives, but deceiving parents and friends. Later, in most cases, they will fall to a lower level still. This condition of society is, of course ruinous to a nation. The future generation will be impaired both mentally and physically for a great majority of girls who fall as victims of social diseases. They not only may transmit these diseases but also ideas of crime, vice and bad habits that will make a very noticeable effect on the morality of a nation.

To show the conditions of the type in Tacoma, it is only necessary to look in Police Records. All women's cases in Tacoma are handled by the Woman's Protective Division, Superintended by Mrs. Pearl Phillips, a woman of rare personality. The work of this division of the City Police Department "is necessarily quiet, definite, not exploited. The personal element abounds in the story of the friendless girl, the poorly educated, the unskilled worker, the girl with sad or sordid background, or unfit environment and conditions, the girl with meager advantages from families of relatively low standard. To exploit these human interest stories would nullify the aim of the department and destroy its usefulness to the individual. Much of the work of the department is functioned in its final

development through cooperation of other channels such as the Y. W., hospitals, sanitariums, schools, etc.

Excerpts here quoted are taken from the Annual Report of the Protective Division of Tacoma for the year 1920 ending December thirty-first.

Total number of cases investigated-----1033

Each of these cases is dealt with in a different manner, sometimes resulting in trial or being sent to different institutions as shown in the following statistics:

Referred to Juvenile Court-----	74
Referred to other States-----	27
Returned to Parents or Relatives-----	41
Placed in Permanent Homes-----	4
Department of Sanitation-----	269
Referred to Federal Department-----	10
Referred to Co-operating Agencies-----	36
Referred to Prosecuting Attorney-----	101
Miscellaneous Investigation-----	185

The majority of girls tried in the Courts of Tacoma are from houses of ill-fame. As an example of one on these girls, of which it is estimated there are 300 in Tacoma, 100 living wholly by such means, the rest having other employment as a blind to their vice, is this case; "an occupant of a low dive

where vilest practices were permitted and encouraged namely, prostitution of the lowest type abetted by drugs and alcoholic beverages, where a "creeper up" was employed to loot the pockets of the patrons of the house. The girls of the house were occupants only so long as their physical condition made them profitable and then turned over to the Police Department for trial. One of the girls, twenty-one years old was emaciated, physically exhausted by a life of prostitution, abetted by the use of drugs body covered with loathsome abscesses caused by the use of unsterile needles: desperate, ready to use her puny strength to kill those most interested in her, repudiated by her family and a vagrant in every sense of the word she was turned over to the Police. She was committed to Medical Lake Industrial Home and Clinic where after three months of treatment with regular regime, good food, good hours, absence of drugs, she was almost unrecognizable." It is a keen loss to the State of Washington that Governor Hart vetoed the appropriation for this institution which was necessarily closed last month. "It was a safe harbor for the wayward girl past eighteen years of age left to her own devices by the law or lightly considered because of her youth."

Another condition which goes hand in hand with prostitution is the drug habit. There is no provision made in this state for adequate treatment. If drug addicts are caught they are given a short jail sentence of 30, 60, or 90 days which is too short for a cure. After jail confinement "these victims of

nerve distroying, mind wrecking, soul and body devitalizing drugs are released without sufficient will power to recover balance and again are swept into the maelstrom of destruction. These girls say of the drug habit:

"It is forced upon us in various ways."

"In drugged liquor."

"When you are blue over the life you have lived."

"When you are happy to make you happier."

"When you don't care."

"In many ways it is thrust upon us, because they know, the men and women interested in the underworld traffic, including the peddlers themselves that once we begin, we never quit."

"And then we urge it upon the nearest to us. We cannot resist doing it, I don't know why. I guess because we want company in our own misery."

"Yes, we know what it has done to us; it costs from \$15 to \$25 per day and we prostitute our bodies to get it. They will not tell who the peddlers are, fear and appetite keep them silent."

It is not the purpose of the work to plan some better relief for the girl already gone astray or leading a life of prostitution; but to reveal conditions now existing in order to indicate what may occur to any younger girl of the community; to learn from a glimpse of present conditions their causes

and from these facts plan a program that may protect the younger girl of this generation from a life of shame in her future years.

In presenting the causes for existing conditions, a number of the women of this city, who are working on this sort of program, have been consulted. The causes here given are those agreed to by the most of these women. We shall divide these causes into two sections (1) Those arising from conditions in the home (2) Those arising from conditions outside the home.

The greatest cause of girl delinquency is found in the home of today. Our grandmothers say that girls of their day would have been ashamed to act the way that respectable girls are now allowed to act. The lack of religious training is the chief difficulty. In very few homes does one find the family prayers or the family Bible Study in the evening. Mrs. Allen Superintendent of the White Shield Home of Tacoma says that in her opinion this constitutes one of the greatest causes of girls downfall. The White Shield Home, an Institution under management of W. C. T. U. for care of girls during maternal period, has an average of 14 girls between the ages of 14 and 18 all the time. Most of these girls are from Protestant homes but when questioned on their knowledge of the Bible, some of them never opened one in their lives, some did not know what the New and Old Testament were, some had never been to church nor had heard a word of religion from their father and mother.

They did not know the meaning of reverence for God. They had never heard of their bodies as "The Temple of the Holy Spirit". They listen with an indifferent attitude at first to the simple Bible Stories told them each day at the Home. Mrs. Allen says that in almost every case before they leave they are interested in these stories, in learning Bible verses and learning Books of the Bible etc.

Next in importance to lack of religious training is the lack of sincere moral training. In regard to the girls relationship with boys of her age most parents go to either extreme; either placing the girl in an abnormal state by not allowing her to have anything to do with boys or at the other extreme allowing too much freedom to the girl in her choice of boy friendships. In either case the young girl soon learns that her friendship with a boy is considered as decidedly different from that with her girl friends and she dwells on that phase. She is not guided in any respect by her mother and so is left to work out her own salvation. Secondly in the kind of clothes she wears she is bound to be judged. Mothers like to please their young daughters in such matters and calmly allow them to wear clothes that are really immodest. The mother of the girl who is prone to "waywardness" either scolds continually or never speaks of such matters to a girl. The girl sees that those who wear flashy clothes attract the most attention and naturally desires them, not being told by their mothers the dangers that lurk behind such attention.

One cause for girl delinquency that is growing most rapidly is the broken home caused by divorce. Much has been attempted but little done to remedy this evil. It is true in Tacoma that the far greater majority of girls who are victims of vice, crime, disease, brought into the Police Department are girls who have had no homes in their early adolescent years. Mrs. E. C. Bloomquist cites the case of one girl whose parents were divorced and each had married again. The stepfather disliked the girl so she was not happy living with her own mother. Likewise her stepmother disapproved of her, so she could not live with her own father. She was compelled to get out and work and live in a cheap boarding-house where she finally fell. Divorce when there are children is too great a chance, it produces an abnormal condition for the child who needs the guidance of both parents.

Another cause not often thought of is the foreign family. The father and mother who have come to this land from a country with different ideals, beliefs, and institutions are in a maze. The young daughter is educated in the American school and speaks only English. She finds it difficult to go home and explain the happenings of the day to them for they do not appreciate or understand. The girl finds it easy to deceive her mother and go out and have a good time. The poor foreign mother thinks that America is just different and she must let her daughter be an American. This is especially true of immigrants from

Southern Europe. Records in this city show that many girls tried in court are daughters of foreigners.

Poor living conditions help girls to go astray. Of course poverty is not always avoidable, but in the West living conditions need not be so low as in the large eastern cities. Much of pauperism here is avoidable. In these homes, where conditions are obnoxious a girl is forced almost to be wayward. The girl of any type naturally longs for a home that is beautiful, at least a home equal to her friends' homes. Many times this is impossible financially, but, many times it might be improved. These girls say that their father is so selfish that he wants all the house to himself in the evening. Many times he refuses to live in a house large enough and the family consisting of many children are huddled up in two or three rooms. A bed probably in the kitchen, there is no living room and there is no semblance of cleanliness any place. The daughter going to school meeting her friends, soon finds out what conditions in her home ought to be, but knows there is nothing to be done and is discouraged and disgusted. She will have some pleasure so she walks the streets to meet her friends and soon falls victim to sin. The mother has so many duties she trusts her girl and she probably does not know the evils of the city streets. Such homes are not exceptions, but are numerous enough to cause the downfall of many girls even in Tacoma, Says Mrs. Phillips. The

causes outside of the home are really those that follow from conditions of the home. If a girl has had the proper training there is no reason why these causes outside of her home should lead her astray.

The evil denounced the most by the social workers consulted was the dance-hall; not only the cheap hall but very often the respectable one. The Superintendent of White Shield Home says that in her inquiry of the girls as to how they happened to fall, at least seventy-five per cent of them have answered in this manner--"One night I went to a dance and there I met this boy and he danced with me all evening. Then he said some other folks were going out for an automobile ride and asked me to go and so I went." That is how it happened. What it is about dancing that is evil is difficult to say. To the class of girls who have a tendency to "wildness" and perhaps what one lady called "sex-mad", the dance seems to craze them and absolutely blind to danger. Before they know it this temporary madness has led them to destruction. It is not only girls of poor or working families who are crazed in this manner, but, also many girls of highly respectable families at dances supposed to be unquestionable. Older men and women assert that the craze comes from the nature of the modern dances, which in their very movements are suggestive. They say that in such dances as the old fashioned minuet, the old waltz and square dance no suggestiveness of sex immorality is possible. One social work-

er in Tacoma says that the only "decent" dance she knows is the kind of Bible times when everyone danced alone as did Miriam when she led the way of the Israelites from the land of Egypt.

The moving picture theater is felt by many to be a direct cause of immorality in that it suggests to the young mind, those sacred things of life which only the closest ones to the child should impart to him. The manner that the girl acquires the knowledge of these things does not impress her and she fails to see anything but sordidness. Possibly the same thing if told her by her mother would be the sweetest thing in her life and she would as soon die as make of it an ugly thing. It is not only the pictures shown but the nature of the theater itself. Mrs. Phillips says that many young girls when alone on the street meet men around the theater who speak to them and ask them to go to the show. In the darkened theater with certain pictures on the screen, the environment seems like the dance to craze them. Standing around the theater is dangerous. Some type of men are forever on the lookout to "pick up" innocent appearing girls as well as those who are not.

Another reason for delinquency advanced by the Protective Division might be termed indifference of parents toward:

- (1) Unwise friendships
- (2) School and neighborhood contacts
- (3) Unsupervised evening play grounds

"The indifference of parents toward the precarious tenden-

cies of present day youth is amazing. They either are unaware of or minimize the danger of the prolific sources of information, contact with or temptations to delinquency"

In regard to unwise friendships the reports reads: "It has been proven over and over again that many parents are ignorant of even the names of boys and girls with whom their children make companions." Speaking of unsupervised play: "In one neighborhood a group of young girls and boys ranging from thirteen to fifteen years were reported to this department hanging around a corner grocery store smoking cigarettes and using bad language. The mothers of these girls thought nothing could be wrong because their children were in the house by ten o'clock and could not understand that there would be any wrong doing when the boys and girls were all in a group together. It is unfortunately true that the majority of young girls brought before us for counsel or advice are wise beyond their years in knowledge of and participation in forbidden things."

In building up an adequate protective program, it would not be difficult if just one type of girl were to be considered. But every girl who is apt to go astray is not of one particular type. One may be appealed to by one method, another by another. And so every institution which the girl comes in contact with, should be prepared to help her if she needs it.

Of these institutions whose help would prove an adequate

protection, five have been chosen, the home, the school, the church, laws and the community.

The home is by far the most important protective agency of the girl. Margaret Slattery in her book on "The American Girl and Her Community" says; "The American home of today seems to find itself utterly unable to establish a right scale of values. In action if not in word it teaches its daughters smug selfishness, trains them to pay other people to amuse them rather than to find ways of amusing themselves, leads them to estimate the things of life in terms of money. The challenging task is re-education of mothers. It must be performed by the enlightened few joined together in devoted and unselfish service for many. They must call to their aid schools, preachers, newspapers and producers of all literature upon which the American girl feeds her mind and builds her ideals."

The father and mother of today should found their home on a high religious standard. From childhood up the child if taught the simple, beautiful truths of the Bible, of the Fatherhood of God, of the glorious life of Jesus Christ will have something in the fiber of his character that is a strong safeguard to temptation. The child when he remembers that his home was a place where God was revered; when he remembers having heard his father and mother pray for his future life; when he remembers that all the joys and sorrows were taken to the Father of them all, he has something deep in his heart that

cannot be easily tramped out. In advocating a home religious training for the girl, it ought not to be made something that hinders her own religious development, as some of the old fashioned strict religious homes did. A girl should have been trained so that it will not be difficult for her to discuss or just talk with her father or mother of religious matters.

A wise mother will counsel her daughter from the time she is a little girl on problems of morality so that when the critical age comes the girl will have been so trained that she can be relied upon to respond to the right and reject the wrong. Right training in these morals put the stamp of refinement on a girl. The mother of a girl is the person who should by all means teach her daughter concerning sex hygiene, which should also involve the problem of correct dress. These talks between mother and daughter lose in value if it is nothing more than telling her. There must be emotions aroused in the girl of the sacredness of life, of the sacrifice of parents that will make these talks too precious for common talk. Ida M. Tarbell in her book, "The Business of Being a Woman" says: "The great need is that the women of the country realize that freedom unaccompanied by knowledge is one of the most dangerous tools that can be put into a human being's hand.---The girl who goes forth should go armed with knowledge. The home has a power of projecting itself into the lives of those who go out from it. It is where the girl does not carry away a sense of an uninterrupted relation--a certainty that she is a

part of that group and that achievement that she is only carrying on, enlarging, helping to extend, beautify and ripen its work, that she is not homeless. Nothing can so hold her in her isolation as that sense."

The control of friendships during childhood and adolescence is the responsibility of the home. In our own community, there are girls who go every evening to public dances or some such place and their mothers have no idea who they meet there. The mother, however, cannot control her daughters friendship by simply telling her she must give up this or that friend. The home is the ideal place for a daughter to meet her friends and there enjoy wholesome amusement. The girl should not find it necessary to make her friends away from home. If her mother is her confidant, she will no doubt have good friends.

The last point of consideration under the home influence is work and play. A girl who is idle a great part of the time is on the road to temptation. A girl needs to work and sometimes to work hard. Some useful result of her work should be planned so that she is not working just for the sake of work. She needs to play, too, and enter sports to keep her body in trim. The girl who works and plays hard during the day and comes home to find it a place of rest and joy and good fellowship is not likely to want for other amusement.

The next factor of protection is the school. We shall not dwell on the value of an education, as that is undeniable. We shall mention it simply as supplemental to the home. That class

of girls whose homes are undesirable, or to those who have no homes, the school can often help. It can assist in the teaching of sex physiology and hygiene to girls not trained along these lines in the home. If presented in a wise and tactful manner it can do much to teach the girl the sacredness of her body and its functions. Dr. Philip Zenner, Professor of Neurology, Medical Department, University of Cincinnati, says: "The parent should be the ideal teacher (sex-hygiene). Mostly he has a peculiar reluctance to perform this duty and just as often he is quite unfitted for this high function, but in the meantime, the duty and work devolves upon the school.---The right teacher can do almost an infinite amount of good while the wrong teacher will doubtless do harm. It calls for special fitness in temperament and understanding as well as sympathy with the work. It usually calls also for special training, a large part of which should be in biology. Adolescence is the period that should be specially safeguarded. It is almost axiomatic that this course of instruction must have greatest influence on the individual if it is universally imparted, for one's associates are a great power in molding one's character and giving the spur to action."

The Church as well as the other institutions mentioned should be prepared to help the young girls in their religious life. It is just at this point that some girls may be saved. Many girls have a peculiar tendency toward religion, but have

had no means of expression. Dean Cunningham says the very expression of religious experience is strengthening. The church can act as a means to this end. Quoting again from "The American Girl and Her Community"----"The Church must also be awakened to the fact that the problem cannot be solved without it. The Church must be re-educated so that it can ask all the daughters of all the people what they like in church service, what sort of help they long for, what they enjoy singing, what courses and subjects they would be interested in studying, what they need most and what hours they can best come to worship. The Master met needs; sometimes it was physical, often it was mental, most of the time it was spiritual, the hunger of the soul; whatever it was He answered it."

In the statute books may be placed many safeguards for the wayward girl. These come as a prevention and not as a growing factor in the girls life and hence are not as fundamental as the home, the church or the school. Nevertheless good laws are necessary and do bring beneficial results to the present generation and even many more times to the future generation.

First, there should be state regulation of at least the minimum wage for both men and women. A man should be paid for honest work, a sum by which he can support his family respectably. His daughters could then not be compelled to leave home before they are old enough and made to work in non-respectable places where they are subject to temptation. In the case of the working girl, who is absolutely dependent upon herself,

a living wage is necessary or she will fall because of real or supposed need.

If the home is to exist as a stable institution there must be stricter divorce and marriage legislation. Marriage must be looked upon as a serious and not a trial relationship. Therefore the laws making marriage more binding and thus give it a more permanent aspect must be passed. The Western States and especially Washington have a divorce record that is shameful! There should be fewer grounds for divorce, and no blanket clause as in the Washington law. A longer period should elapse before remarriage is allowed. At the present there is little conformity between marriage and divorce laws.

The municipal government should have a more sympathetic interest in protecting the girls. There are so many places in a city that lure and attract a girl who does not know their significance. Before she is aware of it, she may be entrapped. There should be adequate Police protection in such places to protect the ignorant girl. The streets at night in the downtown section are a menace. A respectable girl can seldom walk down the streets of such sections without being accosted by certain type of men. At such a time a policeman can never be seen. In dealing with such men offenders, the court cannot be too severe. A Woman's Protective Division such as Tacoma, Seattle and Portland have is of value to the class of girls who are transient, ignorant, unprotected, and who do not come

in contact with such institutions as a Y.W.C.A.

The last named institution in the protection of the girl is the community. The community has as its duty to supplement and add to all the institutions thus far named. In whatever phase these cannot touch the girl, the community should attempt to do so.

The strongest aid or hindrance to any new movement is public sentiment. Years ago the girl who was or had any tendency to waywardness was barred from community activities. But in later years people are becoming more liberal-minded and public sentiment is swaying toward helping such girls rather than debarring them, for they are of the girls of the community as well as any others. Public sentiment will not object to spending money to protect the girl, because in the result of proper protection, the community will better itself. There are many obstacles to overcome in awakineng the public to such a situation; it becomes the duty of every Christian in the community to awaken others to the problem. If once they are started, they will accomplish their aim.

One duty of the community is toward the Immigrant from whose home it is said many wayward girls go because of a lack of understanding. Mr. Elwood in his Sociology says: "We have lacked a fine sense of hospitality toward the immigrant and his children." We must as communities, assist in the Americanization

of the foriegner. This means to help him over the difficult bridge from his social customs to ours, to help him with our language, above all to be friendly to him. An article from "The Outlook", June 30, 1920 called "Making Americans Out of Immigrants", outlines a desirable course here given in part. "In her biography Mary Antin points out that the Americanization of her family began as soon as they moved into an American neighborhood. Yet just as her mother was gladly learning the American ways from these neighbors the native born moved away because they said they did not want to live next to a Russian Jew." It is through our own aloofness they are not getting into contact with these customs.

- To atone for this aloofness by community Americanization
- (1) By improving environment i. e. by enforcing laws requiring proper construction and maintenance of dwellings be effecient municipal government sewer and water main extension, regular collection of garbage etc.
 - (2) To provide for recreation. Mr. Butler, director of Americanization in Federal Bureau of Education, says: "Nothing will cause the native American to lose his deplorable exclusiveness and unfriendliness so quickly as to mix with the foriegn born people, learn to know them, see them in their beautiful dances and interesting games and come to understand that they have many things which he has not."
 - (3) Community center where forums, pageantry, sings, dances can be enjoyed.

(4) Necessity to protect immigrants from imposition and exploitation.

(5) Community employment bureau and high cost of living.

(6) Necessity of all to learn English. Mr. Butler says we must make facilities so easily available to every one that it will be within the power of every person to secure an education.

The community can act as a powerful force in its control on those factors which cause the girls downfall outside the home, as the dance-hall and motion picture. It would be a good thing if the public dance-hall could be done away with altogether. This, we believe, is impossible so the community should demand at least the right kind of hall, of dances, of men who dance with the girls. The problem is to keep such a place for the purpose of clean amusement and yet to keep it from being harmful. It is almost impossible to arrive at such a situation.

In regard to the motion-picture, the community can demand the best plays and try to keep out as much as possible that which might bring wrong ideals. Censorship of movies has not met altogether with approval in our country. The reason is because the Censors are believed to be some "old fogies" who have no sympathy with the beautiful of life. This need not be the case. The community can by its general approval or disapproval demand the clean motion pictures.

Lastly, there are the girls' clubs organized in the community such as the Girl Scouts, Girl Reserves, Sunday School Classes, and clubs formed for the purpose of social service. These clubs ought to be under the leadership of an older girl who can lead them more by example than precept. Girls of the early 'teen age have a somewhat similar spirit to that of boys called the gang spirit. Clubs appeal to them tremendously. Symbolism and ceremony do also. If these facts are taken advantage of, waywardness may be detracted. In practical as well as theoretical ways this is being done very successfully all over the United States. The community should assist in organization of and co-operation with the plans of these clubs.

More freedom is given to the American girl than any other girl. She thus has more opportunities to fall to temptation because of this freedom. She must not be left to go blindly on, but must be protected. For it is the girl of the present who is the woman and mother of the next generation. If she has been safeguarded and intelligently led on the safe path she can likewise make for her daughter a safe and at the same time a beautiful life.

"The task is so great, the need so varied, that as individuals we can do little, as separate organizations not much more: neither home, school or church can do it alone. If we are to serve her (girl) effectively, we must do it together. The responsibility for her future depends not upon one but

upon all. In the awakened, challenged, impassioned community ,
willing to learn the facts, and face them, eager to modify,
change them, lies the hope for the preservation and conserva-
tion of what is best in all the daughters of all the people.